SPINE-TINGLING TALES OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE

A QUALITY COMIC PUBLICATION

AND WEB OF EVIL

JUNE No.15 10c

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THE CORPSE WHO PROWLED BY NIGHT

The Demon Coat

CRYPTS OF HORROR

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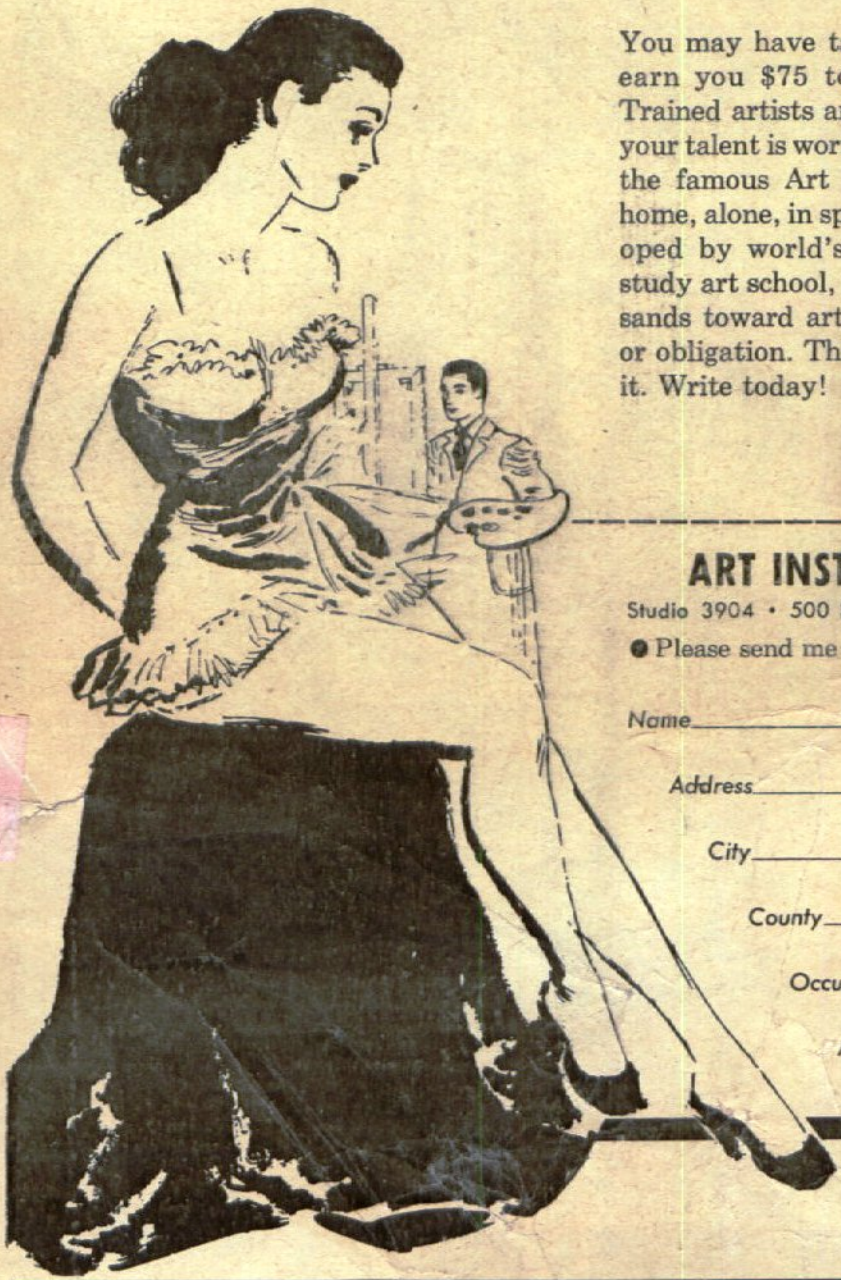

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THERE WERE FOUR WHO SOUGHT THE FABULOUS [illegible] ENOUGH WEALTH TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS FOR A LIFETIME! AND TH[illegible] THEM WAS STRONGER THAN THE FEAR AS THEY DARED DEFY THE ANCIEN[illegible] OF THE MANSION! FOR ONLY THE VULTURE KNEW THEY WERE DOOMED FOREVER WITHIN ---

The Dreaded Crypts of HORROR

FOUR TENSE PEOPLE DRIVE THROUGH OMINOUS MIST TO A STRANGE MANSION DEEP IN THE BOGS!

THE FAMOUS PHIPPS MANSION! UGH! WHAT ON EARTH DOES OUR OLD GOAT UNCLE WANT US HERE FOR, HARVEY?

YES--- WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE JUST TOLD YOU WHAT HIS PROBLEM WAS WHEN YOU VISITED HIM LAST WEEK?

I TOLD YOU I DON'T KNOW, THAXTER---

HE JUST SAID IT WAS URGENT THAT ALL OF US BE HERE TODAY WITHOUT FAIL!

HUMPH! THE OLD FOOL SHOULD BE IN A MENTAL INSTITUTION! HE'S THROWN HALF HIS FORTUNE AWAY IMPORTING THOSE HIDEOUS ROOMS OF HORROR HE LIVES IN!

SOON, A GNARLED OLD MAN GREETS THE UNHAPPY VISITORS!

AH, MY CHARMING NEPHEWS AND NIECES! HOW NICE WE CAN ALL BE TOGETHER! COME IN! COME IN!

SARA, CANDY--- YOU TWO CHARMING GIRLS CAN SIT HERE! I'M SURE IGOR WILL LIKE YOUR COMPANY!

THAT LOATHESOME CREATURE!

WHY DON'T YOU GET RID OF THAT BEAST, UNCLE CYRUS? UGH!

IGOR IS MY FRIEND! YOU JUST CAN'T SEE THE BEAUTY BENEATH HIS UGLINESS! BUT DOWN TO BUSINESS --- ***I'VE CUT YOU ALL OUT OF MY WILL!*** BUT, IF YOU DO MY BIDDING, YOU CAN STILL GET MY FORTUNE AND ***AT ONCE!***

WHA---?

WE'RE C-CUT OFF! B-BUT HOW CAN WE GET THE MONEY NOW?

IF EACH OF YOU SPEND THE NIGHT IN ONE OF MY IMPORTED ROOMS OF HORROR ***THE MONEY IS YOURS!*** MY ATTORNEY HAS DRAWN UP LEGAL PAPERS THAT AWARD YOU THE MONEY IF YOU DO THIS!

WHAT! STAY OVERNIGHT IN ONE OF THOSE GRUESOME PLACES WHY?

WHY! BECAUSE YOU'RE ALL A PACK OF SNIVELING WASTRELS! YOU'RE NOT WORTHY OF THE FORTUNE I WON BY DEFYING DEATH, DANGER AND HORROR IN THE WORLD! NOW DRAW YOUR ROOMS AND SLEEP IN IT IF YOU WANT MY RICHES!

MAD AS A MARCH HARE!

OLD NUT!

AWWWK! AWWWK!

GRIMLY, THE MONEY HUNGRY GROUP DRAW FROM THE SKULL!
IT'S A SHAME YOU COWARDS HAVE NOT DARED VISIT MY ROOMS BEFORE! BUT NOW YOU SHALL SEE WHAT A PRICELESS COLLECTION IT IS! I HAVE HAD THEM SHIPPED INTACT FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE GLOBE!
THE SPANISH SPECTRE ROOM!
THE JACK THE RIPPER ROOM!

THE AFRICAN VOODOO ROOM! UGH!
THE AZTEC TOMB ROOM!
IF YOU DARE STEP INTO THE ROOMS TONIGHT, WHEN THE LAWYER ARRIVES AT EIGHT A.M. TOMORROW HE WILL HAND YOU THE PAPERS THAT MAKE THE FORTUNE YOURS! IF YOU'RE NOT THERE YOU DON'T GET A PENNY! REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THE DOOR WILL LOCK AUTOMATICALLY WHEN YOU ARE INSIDE!

SUDDENLY---
OH-H! M-MY HEART!
UNCLE!
GOOD GRIEF!

DEAD! HIS HEART GAVE WAY!
GREAT HANNAH! JUST AS WE WERE ABOUT TO GET HIS FORTUNE! W-WE'RE SUNK NOW!

NONSENSE! HIS ATTORNEY WILL BE HERE IN THE MORNING! IF HE FINDS US IN THOSE LOCKED ROOMS WE'VE EVERY RIGHT TO THE FORTUNE! I, FOR ONE, AM GOING TO BE THERE!
H-HE'S RIGHT! THE PAPERS ARE MADE OUT! HA-HA! WE'VE TRICKED THE OLD BIRD!

THUSLY, A MOMENT AFTERWARD THE FOUR FORTUNE SEEKERS WALK DOWN AN EERIE CORRIDOR AND---
HERE'S MINE, THE AZTEC TOMB ROOM!
AND MINE!
SUCH SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE! FOR HALF A MILLION DOLLARS I CAN CERTAINLY STAND THIS HORRIBLE PLACE FOR ONE NIGHT!
JACK THE RIPPER ROOM

SUDDENLY, AS SARA PHIPPS ENTERS HER ROOM OF HORROR!

ENTER, STRANGER! ENTER THE WORLD OF VOODOO! LEARN THE MYSTERIES OF A WORLD BEYOND!
NO, NO!

I-IT'S TERRIBLE! TERRIBLE! THERE ARE LIVE THINGS IN THERE --- VOICES!
SARA! DON'T BE A FOOL!

CAN'T YOU SEE THOSE ARE ALL MECHANICAL TRICKS OF OUR FOOL UNCLE! DO WHAT YOU WANT--- BUT FOR THE WEALTH I STAND TO GET NO MUMBO JUMBO IS GOING TO SCARE ME OFF!
O-OF COURSE! HE PLANNED IT ALL THIS WAY TO SCARE US HALF TO DEATH! DON'T WORRY --- I'M NOT GETTING CHEATED OF MY SHARE OF THE FORTUNE, HARVEY!

FOR CENTURIES WHITE MEN HAVE SCOFFED AT THE POWERS OF VOODOO! NOW YOU SHALL SEE THE EVIL IS TRUE!
T-THAT'S JUST A RECORDING CYRUS SOUGHT TO FRIGHTEN ME WITH! I'LL CHANGE THINGS IN THIS GHASTLY LITTLE PLACE!
CLICK

THERE --- AND THERE! HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT FOR SOME TWENTIETH CENTURY VOODOO?

BUT SARA CANNOT STOP THE OMINOUS CHANT OF THE WITCH DOCTOR'S VOICE AS IT FILLS THE CHAMBER ---
YOU ARE IN THE CHAMBER OF EXECUTION --- THOSE WHO SCORN THE MIGHTY WITCH DOCTOR ARE DOOMED TO DIE HERE!
T-THAT VOICE! H-HOW CAN I STOP IT! I-I CAN'T STAND IT!

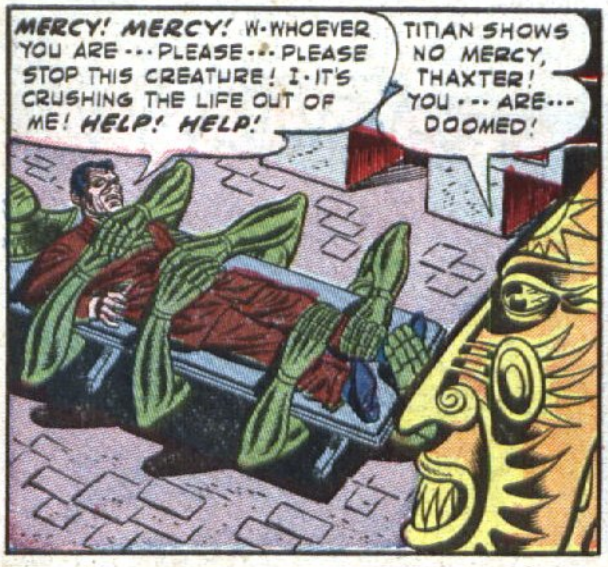
WAX FROM THE CANDLE! I'LL --- SHUT OUT THAT TERRIBLE SOUND ONCE AND FOR ALL!

DEAFENED TO THE SOUNDS OF EVIL, SARA RELAXES --- AND FROM THE SHADOWS A FIGURE STEPS FORTH!
W-WHAT'S THAT!
A-ANOTHER MECHANICAL THING! S-SOONER OR LATER IT WILL RUN DOWN FOR LACK OF POWER! I'LL--- JUST KEEP AWAY FROM IT!
BUT THE SWAYING FORM COMES CLOSER! AS IF DIRECTED BY SOME MYSTIC POWER IT FOLLOWS THE DESPERATE GIRL - - -
I-IT'S FOLLOWING ME! BUT HOW ---? IT'S --- JUST A MECHANICAL THING!
THEN!
FLESH! BEEEEE! IT'S --- ALIVE!
NATIVE STEEL GLEAMS IN THE CANDLELIGHT! THE EXECUTIONER'S SWORD IS RAISED --- AND FALLS!
YAAAAA AAAA
MEANWHILE, THAXTER PHIPPS ACCEPTS HIS ROOM OF EVIL CALMLY!
WHAT UTTER RUBBISH! CYRUS WAS CERTAINLY MAD --- HE WAS CONVINCED ALL EVIL ABSORBED ITSELF INTO THE ROOMS WHERE IT WAS COMMITTED! BAH!
AZTEC TOMB ROOM UNEARTHED IN MEXICO
WELL, THE SMART THING TO DO IS JUST GO TO BED AND SLEEP THROUGH THIS UGLY FOOLISHNESS! IN THE MORNING I'LL BE RICH AND WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD!

BUT AS THAXTER STRIVES TO SLEEP IN THE OMINOUS ROOM ...
HEH, HEH! SLEEP WELL, THAXTER PHIPPS! YOU WILL SOON LEARN THE HORROR METED OUT TO THOSE DOOMED TO THE AZTEC TOMB ROOM!
EH? W-WHAT'S THAT?

AND ABRUPTLY ...
GOOD GRIEF! I-IT MUST BE MY NERVES ... I-I'M IMAGINING I HEAR VOICES! WHA ...? THOSE ARMS! T-THE MONSTROUS THINGS ARE ... MOVING!

T-THEY'RE HOLDING ME DOWN!
HEE, HEE, HEE! THAT IS HOW ANCIENT TRAITORS TO MY AZTEC KINGDOM WERE TREATED, MR. THAXTER ... NONE ESCAPED THE ARMS OF TITIAN!


MERCY! MERCY! W-WHOEVER YOU ARE ... PLEASE ... PLEASE STOP THIS CREATURE! I-IT'S CRUSHING THE LIFE OUT OF ME! HELP! HELP!
TITIAN SHOWS NO MERCY, THAXTER! YOU ... ARE ... DOOMED!

VII-I-I-I! ARRGHHHH!
FAREWELL, FOOL! PERHAPS NOW YOU BELIEVE THE EVIL OF YESTERYEAR!

MEANWHILE IN THE JACK THE RIPPER ROOM! CANDY PHIPPS HEARS THE FEARFUL CRIES!
GOODNESS! THAT SOUNDS LIKE STUPID THAXTER! WHAT A COWARD ... IMAGINE BEING FRIGHTENED OF ALL OUR CRAZY UNCLE'S MUMBO JUMBO!
JACK THE RIPPER ROOM

HA! VICTIMS OF JACK THE RIPPER! SUCH NONSENSE!

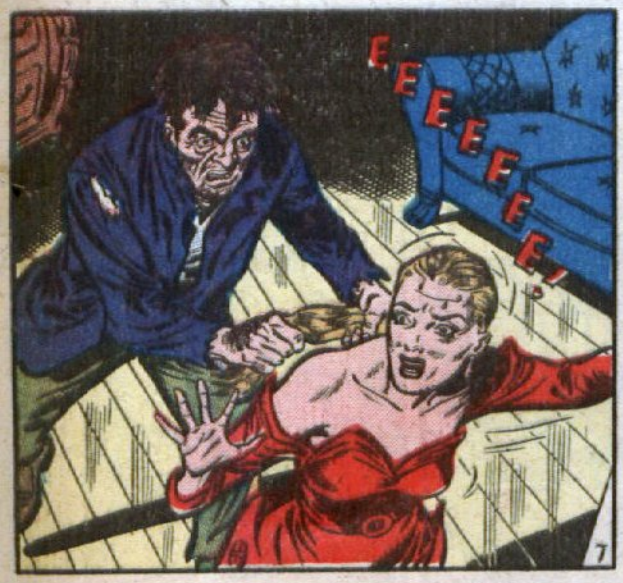
WELL, JUST ONE NIGHT IN THIS GRISLY PLACE AND MY FINANCIAL WORRIES WILL BE OVER! TA TE DUM DUM! SO THIS IS WHERE JACK THE RIPPER PLOTTED HIS MURDERS! VERY AMUSING!

BUT SLOW, SOFT FOOTSTEPS FALL BEHIND THE GLAMOUROUS CANDY! A HOT BREATH SEARS HER NECK AND ---
EEEEEK!

W-WHO ARE YOU? W-WHAT ARE YOU? GET OUT! GET OUT!

HE'S MAD! HELP, HELP! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

YOU! JACK THE RIPPER! T-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! LET ME OUT SOMEONE!


EEEEEEE!

ONE MORE VICTIM ADDED TO THE MACABRE COLLECTION OF JACK THE RIPPER!

THEN, THE MURDER MONSTER FROM THE PAST STALKS TO THE WALL AND---

SHORTLY, THE CREATURE SLIPS THROUGH A SLIDING PANEL AND---
HA, HA! I'VE WON! EVERYTHING IS MINE!
SPANISH SPECTRE ROOM
TAKEN FROM MILAN CASTLE WHERE GHOSTS ROAMED 2000 YEARS AGO.

HA, HA, HA! HOW I TURNED THE TABLES ON THE TREACHEROUS OLD ROGUE! EVERY CENT OF HIS FORTUNE BELONGS TO ME NOW THAT I'VE KILLED SARA, THAXTER AND CANDY! I NEED ONLY WAIT FOR THE ATTORNEY IN THE MORNING!

SUDDENLY---
EH; WHAT'S THAT?
YIPE!

YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK I'D LET YOU LIVE DID YOU, HARVEY? HEH, HEH! NO INDEED! THE SECRET PANEL I TOLD YOU OF IS LOCKED BEHIND YOU!
T-THAT VOICE! I-IT'S UNCLE'S... HE'S BETRAYED ME! HE--- HAD A RECORDING MADE!

I USED YOU, HARVEY! YOU WERE NO BETTER THAN THE REST--- BUT IT WAS SIMPLER TO HAVE YOU KILL THEM FIRST! HEH, HEH--- AND NOW, THE WALLS OF YOUR ROOM WILL CLOSE IN AND CRUSH YOU TO DEATH!
I-I'M--- TRAPPED--- TRAPPED!

FATE EXTENDS A HELPING HAND TO THE FRANTIC MAN AS---
T-THE PANEL... IT WAS STUCK OPEN! I-I'M FREE... FREE!
YOU WERE ALL WORTHLESS COWARDS AND I VOWED MY FORTUNE WOULD NEVER FALL INTO YOUR HANDS! HEH, HEH! DIE, DEAR NEPHEW!

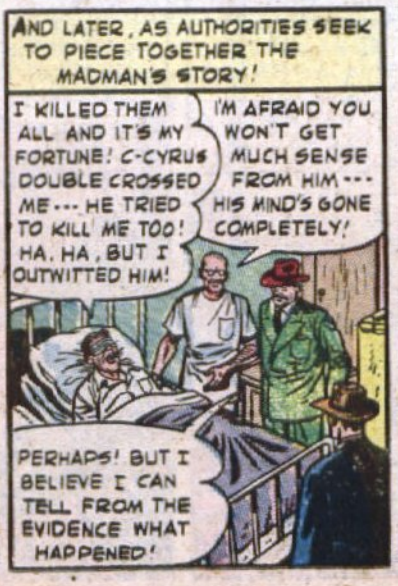
THEN, A STARK TERROR TOUCHES THE KILLER'S MIND AS ---
YAAAA! THAT VULTURE!
AWWWRK! AWWWRK!

YOU! I-IT'S SEEKING VENGEANCE FOR OLD CYRUS! D-DON'T COME NEAR ME!

AWWWRK! AWWWRK!

PANIC AND FATIGUE DRAIN THE STRENGTH FROM HARVEY PHIPPS! HE STAGGERS --- FALLS AND THE SHRIEKING VULTURE SWOOPS DOWN!
DON'T! DON'T KILL ME! YAAAAAAAA!

NEXT MORNING, THE POLICE CARRY A RAVING THING FROM THE MARSHLAND ---
GOOD GRIEF! HE'S MAD! A RAVING MANIAC!
T-THE LAWYER --- WHEN IS THE LAWYER COMING?


AND LATER, AS AUTHORITIES SEEK TO PIECE TOGETHER THE MADMAN'S STORY!
I KILLED THEM ALL AND IT'S MY FORTUNE! C-CYRUS DOUBLE CROSSED ME --- HE TRIED TO KILL ME TOO! HA, HA, BUT I OUTWITTED HIM!
I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T GET MUCH SENSE FROM HIM --- HIS MIND'S GONE COMPLETELY!
PERHAPS! BUT I BELIEVE I CAN TELL FROM THE EVIDENCE WHAT HAPPENED!

IT'S CLEAR OLD CYRUS GOT HARVEY TO KILL THE OTHERS! BUT FIRST HARVEY POISONED HIS UNCLE! THEY BOTH BETRAYED EACH OTHER OBVIOUSLY --- BUT --- HOW IN THUNDER DID CYRUS STRIKE BACK AFTER HE WAS DEAD! THOSE GHOST GIMMICKS AND RECORDS DIDN'T HURT THIS MAN! STRANGE --- MIGHTY STRANGE!

THE HAUNTED FOREST

YAAA... LEAVE ME ALONE! THE LEGEND OF THIS EVIL PLACE WAS TRUE! IT'S FILLED WITH DEMONS!

EACH PERSON WHO SET FOOT IN THE OMINOUS WOODS SUFFERED A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH! WHY? WHAT WAS BEHIND THE EVIL PLACE THAT DROVE MEN MAD! MANNING AND YATES WERE DETERMINED TO FIND OUT! BUT LITTLE DID THEY REALIZE THAT THEY THEMSELVES WOULD FALL VICTIMS TO ITS TERROR!

IN THEIR NEW YORK OFFICE YATES AND MANNING, DEBUNKERS OF THE SUPERNATURAL, FACE GRIM REALITY!

WE'RE FINISHED, MANNING... OUT OF BUSINESS! THERE JUST ISN'T ANOTHER SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENON TO DEBUNK!

BUT THERE MUST BE! WE'VE MADE A FORTUNE UP TO NOW... WE CAN'T GIVE UP! WAIT A MINUTE... THERE IS ONE UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENON WE COULD TACKLE!

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK EXPOSED

THE MEDIUM HOAX

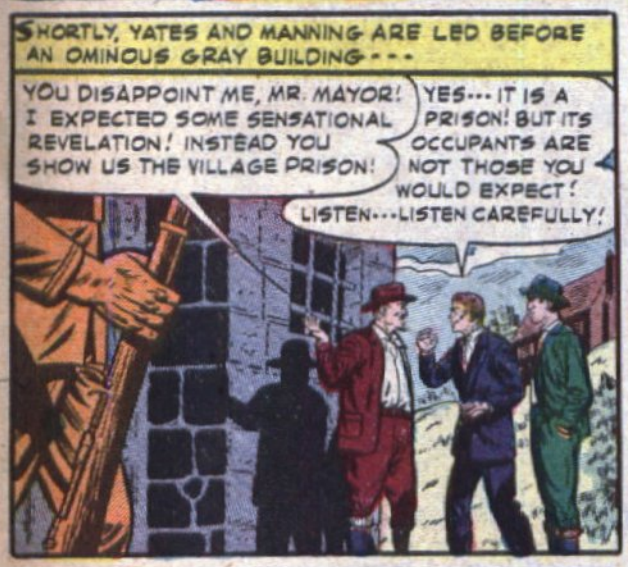
THE HAUNTED FOREST! IF WE COULD DEBUNK THAT LEGEND WE'D MAKE THOUSANDS!

WHAT? YOU MUST BE MAD, MANNING! WHY EVERYONE WHO'S DARED TO ENTER THAT FOREST HAS COME OUT A RAVING MANIAC! THERE'S NOTHING PHONY ABOUT THAT PLACE!

NONSENSE! IT'S PROBABLY ALL JUST A SHOW FOR THE TOURISTS! WE'VE GOT TO GIVE IT A TRY, YATES--- IT'S SINK OR SWIM FOR US!
THERE ISN'T A DEBUNKER IN THE BUSINESS WHO'S HAD THE COURAGE TO CRACK THAT ONE! BUT I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT--- WE'RE IN NO POSITION TO BE PARTICULAR!

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, THE TWO MEN ARRIVE AT DEVIL'S GATE, A SMALL VILLAGE BORDERING THE HAUNTED FOREST!
THAT FENCE, MAYOR--- JUST WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?
TO SAFEGUARD OUR CHILDREN, MR. YATES! THE LITTLE ONES ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE EVILS OUT THERE--- IN THE FOREST! NO PERSON HAS GONE BEYOND THAT FENCE IN OVER SEVEN YEARS!

I'M AFRAID WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHATTER THAT RECORD! MAYOR! YOU SEE, YATES AND I ARE GOING INTO THAT FOREST AND DEBUNK THIS RIDICULOUS LEGEND!
RIDICULOUS! BEFORE YOU VENTURE IN THERE, MR. MANNING, I THINK THERE IS SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE! COME--- IT'S AT THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE!


SHORTLY, YATES AND MANNING ARE LED BEFORE AN OMINOUS GRAY BUILDING---
YOU DISAPPOINT ME, MR. MAYOR! I EXPECTED SOME SENSATIONAL REVELATION! INSTEAD YOU SHOW US THE VILLAGE PRISON!
YES--- IT IS A PRISON! BUT ITS OCCUPANTS ARE NOT THOSE YOU WOULD EXPECT! LISTEN---LISTEN CAREFULLY!

FOR SEVERAL SECONDS THE TWO ADVENTURERS STAND SILENTLY! THEN---
ARIEEOOO
G-GREAT SCOTT! WHAT WAS THAT HORRIBLE SCREAM?
GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, YATES! THERE'S A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR THAT CRY! LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
DON'T STAND TOO CLOSE TO THE WINDOW, GENTLEMEN!

YATES AND MANNING STEP UP TO THE BARRED WINDOW AND STARE WITH AWE AT THE SIGHT WITHIN!
YIIII! I MUST ESCAPE! LET ME OUT OF THE HAUNTED FOREST!
T-THE TREES--- THE ROCKS--- THEY'RE ALL AFTER ME! AHHHHH!
M-MANNING! THIS IS THE VILLAGE MAD HOUSE! BUT--- THERE ARE SO MANY LOCKED IN THERE!

YES-- AND ALL OF THEM CHALLENGED THE LEGEND OF THE HAUNTED FOREST! WE FOUND THEM TREMBLING WITH FEAR AT THE EDGE OF THE FENCE! SURELY, YOU WON'T GO OUT THERE NOW!
SAVE THAT LINE FOR THE TOURISTS, MR. MAYOR! THOSE CHARACTERS IN THAT MAD HOUSE ARE PROBABLY ON YOUR PAY ROLL! YATES AND I ARE LEAVING AT DAWN FOR THE FOREST!

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AS YATES AND MANNING PREPARE TO ENTER THE FORBIDDING WOODS ---

I'M DR. ELLIOT, GENTLEMEN --- IN CHARGE OF A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO STUDY THE HAUNTED FOREST! IN HEAVENS NAME DON'T GO IN THERE UNTIL WE'VE CHECKED IT!

YES --- AND WIN RECOGNITION FOR REVEALING IT AS A FRAUD THAT IT IS! I'M SORRY, DOCTOR, THAT'S ONE GLORY MY PARTNER AND I HAVE IN MIND!

MANNING --- PERHAPS WE'D BETTER RECONSIDER! IF THE GOVERNMENT THINKS ENOUGH ABOUT THIS PLACE TO SEND AN EXPENSIVE EXPEDITION HERE THERE MAY BE SOMETHING TO THE LEGEND!

DON'T LET THEM SWAY YOUR MIND, YOU FOOL! THIS IS ALL A GIGANTIC FARCE --- AND WE'RE GOING TO PROVE IT!

THE OMINOUS WOODS SOON ENVELOP THE PAIR IN IT'S SWIRLING MIST! THEY ARE ON THE ROAD --- FROM WHICH THERE MAY BE NO RETURN!

MANNING --- HAVE YOU NOTICED? WE HAVEN'T HEARD THE CHIRP OF A BIRD OR SEEN ANY LIFE SINCE WE ENTERED THE FOREST!

SO WHAT! GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, YATES!

DEEPER --- DEEPER THEY GO! THEN THE DEATH-LIKE STILLNESS IS SUDDENLY BROKEN BY YATES' SPINE-CHILLING CRY!

AAAIEE! M-MANNING! THAT TREE --- IT'S GLARING AT US!

WHAT? YOU MUST BE IMAGINING THINGS, YATES!

GOOD GRIEF! I-I SEE IT TOO! IT'S A CREATURE OF SOME SORT!

GET OUT OF HERE, MANNING! QUICKLY!

BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN THE CRACK OF A WHIP TO ESCAPE THE EVILS OF HAUNTED FOREST!

LOOK! THEY'RE --- ALL AROUND US! TURN AROUND, MANNING! HEAD BACK TO THE VILLAGE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YES --- THAT'S IT! THE VILLAGE!

AAARROO

U-UGH! SOMETHING'S GOT ME ABOUT THE THROAT! I-I CAN'T BREATH ---

I'LL --- BE WITH YOU IN A SECOND, YATES!

H-HURRY---UGH! IT'S THROTTLING---ME---
STEADY!
NO ONE ESCAPES US--

AIR--- A-I-R--- MANNING! WHERE--- ARE YOU?-
H-HUH! THE THING---TOOK IT RIGHT OUT OF MY HAND! I-I CAN'T HELP YOU, YATES---

--GOT TO THINK OF MYSELF! THIS HORSE AND BUGGY IS MY ONLY CHANCE!
D-DON'T---LEAVE--- ME! DON'T---

YAAAAA!
DON'T TOUCH ME--- NO! HELP!

THEN, AS THE TERRIFIED MANNING THUNDERS TOWARD THE SAFETY OF THE VILLAGE---
CRACK!

THIS--- MUST ALL BE A FANTASTIC DREAM! IT COULDN'T HAPPEN! I-I MUST PULL MYSELF TOGETHER---BE LOGICAL!

SURE--- I'M IMAGINING THIS THAT'S IT! NOW GOT TO GET STARTED BACK TO THE VILLAGE---WHA-!

A-A GIANT SPIDER! BUT IT WAS A ROCK JUST A SECOND AGO! LEMME OUTA HERE!
AARROOOO

GET AWAY FROM ME! HELP! HELP!

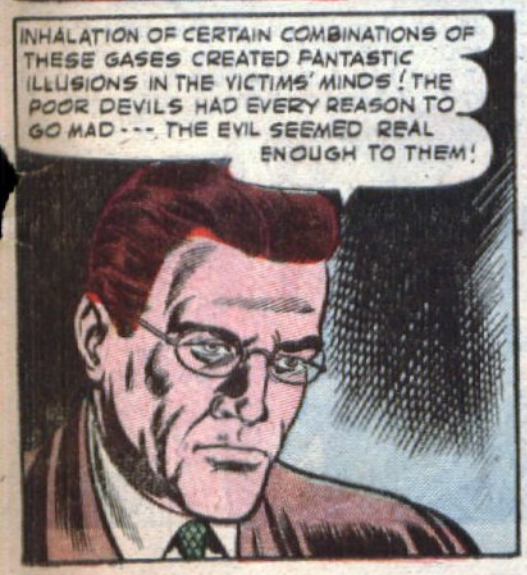
HIS HEART BEATING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER, MANNING SEARCHES FOR A MEANS OF ESCAPE IN HIS LAST MOMENTS OF SANITY!
ESCAPE! HOW--- HOW? MUST GET OUT OF THE FOREST--- GOING--- MAD---

WATER! THAT'S IT--- THEY CAN'T TOUCH ME THERE! HAHAHA---

HO HOHO--- I'VE OUTWITTED THEM! THEY CAN'T FOLLOW ME INTO THE WATER!

NO--- THE DEMONS OF HAUNTED FOREST COULDN'T FOLLOW MANNING! BUT A GREATER TERROR WAS AWAITING HIM THERE IN THE LAKE!
NOW WHAT WILL YOU DO, YOU THINGS OF EVIL! I'VE BEATEN YOU--- WHAT! MY LEGS--- WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY LEGS?

SOMETHING'S DOWN THERE--- TRYING TO PULL ME UNDER! I-I CAN'T STAY HERE!



AND SO THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING THE HAUNTED FOREST WAS AT LAST SOLVED! BUT DEBUNKER MANNING AND HIS PARTNER WILL NEVER LEARN THE ANSWER! FOR THEY THEMSELVES BECAME VICTIMS OF THE EVIL WOODS!

THE DEMON COAT

N-NO! LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU DEMONS! DON'T TAKE MY LIFE LIKE YOU DID THE OTHERS!

GOOD GRIEF--- THAT MAN IS MAD!

IT WAS A COLORFUL EGYPTIAN GARMENT--- BUT EACH STRAND OF ITS OMINOUS CLOTH REPRESENTED AN AGE-OLD EVIL! AND TO ALL THOSE WHO WORE IT THE ANCIENT CURSE CAME TO LIFE TORMENTING IT'S VICTIMS WITH SUCH INDESCRIBABLE HORROR THAT THEY WELCOMED DEATH WITH OPEN ARMS!

ON A CAIRO SIDE STREET A FURTIVE FIGURE NERVOUSLY KNOCKS ON A TERRACE DOORWAY---

HURRY, MR. MASTERSON! OPEN THE DOOR QUICKLY--- QUICKLY!

FINALLY, THE DOOR IS OPENED TO THE EXCITED LITTLE MAN ---

SO IT IS YOU, ANNAR! WHAT BRINGS YOU BARGAINING AT THIS HOUR OF NIGHT?

SOMETHING OF THE GREATEST URGENCY, MR. MASTERSON! I HAVE UNEARTHED THE GREATEST COLLECTOR'S TREASURE OF ALL!

AND INSIDE··· AT THE RISK OF MY VERY LIFE I CREPT INTO THE TOMB OF THE GREAT KING TUT! I PRIED MY WAY INTO THE VAULT AND FOUND IT THERE OVER A MUMMIFIED BODY! THIS IS THE DEMON COAT!
KING TUT'S DEMON COAT! FANTASTIC!

EXPEDITIONS FOR CENTURIES HAVE SOUGHT THE ACCURSED DEMON COAT! BECAUSE I AM A COLLECTOR OF IMPORTANCE IT WAS GREEDY OF YOU TO SEEK AND FOOL ME, ANNAR! HOWEVER, IT IS A RARE AND BEAUTIFUL EGYPTIAN PIECE···
NO, NO! I TELL YOU THIS IS THE DEMON COAT ITSELF! AT THIS MOMENT KILLERS OF THE SACRED CAIRO SOCIETY SEEK TO SLAY ME FOR TAKING IT!

THE SOCIETY HAS CONCEALED ITS WHEREABOUTS FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS BUT I OUTWITTED THEM! PLEASE, I ASK ONLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR IT! PAY ME QUICKLY!
HA! YOU'RE A CANNY DEVIL, ANNAR! I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED FOR THE COAT'S BEAUTY AND FIVE HUNDRED MORE FOR YOUR WIT!

I-I HAVE NO TIME TO BARTER, MR. MASTERSON! BUT··· NEVER FORGET··· YOU DO POSSESS THE DEMON COAT!
BE GONE, YOU SLY RASCAL! HA HA! WHAT WILL YOUR SHREWD LITTLE BRAIN DREAM UP NEXT!

ANNAR'S FRIGHTENED EYES SCAN THE FOLIAGE AS HE LEAVES! BUT HE DOES NOT SEE SUDDEN DEATH HOVER OVERHEAD···
HE COMES!
ALAS! HE HAS DISPOSED OF THE SACRED COAT! QUICKLY···

YOUUUU!
DISPOILER OF THE TOMB!
INFIDEL!

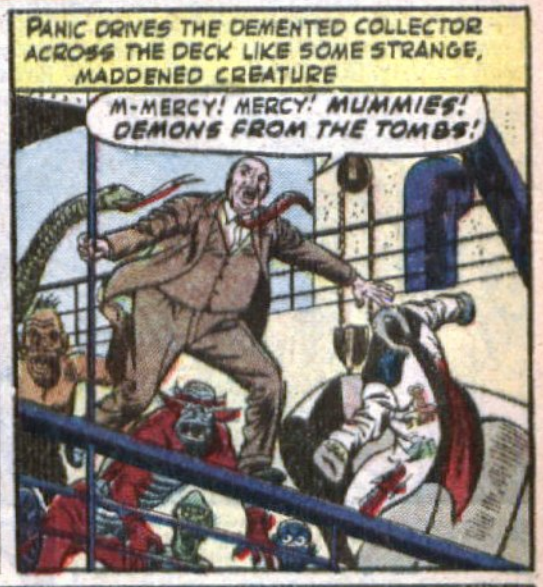
ANGUISHED CRIES RING OUT THROUGH THE EMPTY CAIRO STREETS···
HE WILL NOT SPEAK! SLAY HIM BEFORE WE ARE DISCOVERED!
LET THE COAT SEEK ITS OWN VENGEANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO HAVE DEFILED IT!
ARRRGHH

AND A WEEK LATER, AS MILLIONAIRE COLLECTOR JOHN MASTERSON SAILS HOMEWARD TO NEW YORK!
JOHN, WHY NOT WEAR THAT LOVELY EGYPTIAN COAT FOR OUR TURN ABOUT THE DECK!
OH, AGNES, DON'T BE ABSURD! I'D LOOK LIKE SOME SORT OF THEATRICAL PERFORMER IN THAT THING!

DON'T BE SILLY, DEAR! IT'S JUST THE THING FOR SHIPBOARD--- YOU'LL BE THE ENVY OF EVERY MAN ABOARD!
HA, HA! ALL RIGHT--- MAKE A FOOL OUT OF ME, AGNES!

BUT SUDDENLY, AS JOHN MASTERSON STEPS ON DECK CLOTHED IN THE ANCIENT GARMENT---
G-GOOD GRIEF! AGNES! W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU! YOUR FACE!
JOHN! WHAT'S WRONG?

ABRUPTLY, A SHRILL, OMINOUS WAIL FILLS MASTERSON'S EARS! AGE-OLD DEMONS SPEW FORTH FROM THE DECK---
AAAIIIEEOOO
YAAA! STOP! STOP! I CAN'T BEAR IT!


PANIC DRIVES THE DEMENTED COLLECTOR ACROSS THE DECK LIKE SOME STRANGE, MADDENED CREATURE
M-MERCY! MERCY! MUMMIES! DEMONS FROM THE TOMBS!

THEN---
I-IT WAS GHASTLY! HIS MIND SEEMED TO SNAP--- H-HE SCREAMED OF MUMMIES AND TOMB DEMONS AND--- AND LEAPED OVERBOARD! SOB! SOB!
STEADY, MRS. MASTERSON! WE'LL TURN ABOUT AND TRY TO FIND HIM!

H-HE HAD JUST PUT ON A RARE EGYPTIAN COAT W-WHEN IT FIRST STARTED--- SOB! SOB!
HOW TERRIBLE, RICHARD!
POOR DEVIL! COLLECTING ALL THOSE WEIRD EGYPTIAN PIECES MUST HAVE TURNED HIS MIND!

ONCE AGAIN THE DEMON COAT FINDS A MODERN BODY--- AND ONCE AGAIN FORBIDDEN EVIL FROM THE PAST IS UNLEASHED UPON IT'S WEARER!

HIS MIND POISONED WITH REVENGE, RICHARD BURKE HURRIED TO A TELEPHONE UPON DOCKING IN NEW YORK!

RICHARD BURKE'S PULSE BEAT WITH HATRED AS HE DEPARTED TO KEEP HIS DATE THAT EVENING! BUT THE EXCITEMENT --- THE ANTICIPATION ---WAS TOO MUCH FOR A MAN IN ILL HEALTH!

THEN SUDDENLY---
HE'S FAINTED! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
I'M A DOCTOR! SOMEBODY CALL FOR AN AMBULANCE! MEANTIME WE'VE GOT TO KEEP THE PATIENT WARM! THAT COAT UNDER HIS ARM--- PUT IT ON HIM!
OHH!

FATE WORKED AGAINST RICHARD BURKE THAT DAY! FOR THE VERY EVIL HE HAD PLANNED FOR ANOTHER BOOMERANGED FOR HIM!
O-OH!
HE'S REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS! STAND BACK EVERYONE--- GIVE HIM AIR---

AND SHORTLY, AS THE AMBULANCE FOUGHT ITS WAY THROUGH CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC---
WHERE AM I--- WHAT'S HAPPENED! THE COAT--- I'M WEARING THE COAT!
STEADY, FELLER--- WE'RE TAKING YOU TO CITY HOSPITAL! YOU'LL BE OKAY!

YIII! YOU'VE COME OUT OF THE PAST TO PLAGUE ME! LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU THINGS OF EVIL!
JOE--- THE GUY'S DELIRIOUS! BETTER GIVE HIM A SHOT!
RIGHT!

GET AWAY! GET AWAY! YOU WON'T INJECT ME WITH YOUR VENOM! I WON'T DIE LIKE ANN AND MASTERSON DID!
L-LOOK OUT---

WITH A HEART FULL OF FEAR, BURKE LEAPT FROM THE AMBULANCE---
WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM! THAT CHARACTER'S DANGEROUS, JOE!
NO! I-I'VE GOT TO TAKE THIS THING OFF BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE---
PITAL

I-IT WON'T COME OFF! I CAN'T TAKE THE DEMON COAT OFF!

AND THUS, AT CITY MORGUE, THE FANTASTIC ODYSSESY OF THE DEMON COAT REACHED ITS END--- BUT NOT BEFORE RETURNING TO TAKE THE LIVES OF FOUR PEOPLE!

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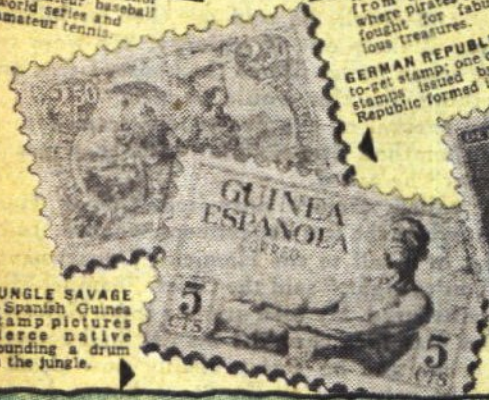

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The Myth of the Maniac

A SHRIEK cut the crisp air of approaching evening and pierced Patrolman Jud Hanley's ear like an icy dart. A shiver ran up his spine and he stopped on his beat, frozen in his tracks. It came again, a shrill wail, like the frantic cry of a wild beast. And there was no mistaking that it came from the sedate, big white house that was occupied by Jonathon Stone.

"What in the world?" thought Jud as he raced across the huge lawn that divided the house from the street. "I've never heard anything like it." There was another scream and Jud Hanley's eyes followed its source to a barred attic window. He gasped at what he saw.

It was a man with shaggy black and matted hair. He looked more like a monster than a man. And yet, even in the semi-darkness, Jud saw that the face seemed unmistakably to be that of Jonathon Stone.

"But it can't be," he reasoned. "I saw Mr. Stone drive in not more than thirty minutes ago."

Jud knocked loudly on the door. No answer. He tried opening it but it was locked. He knocked again but all was silence. Even the weird cries had stopped. He was about to break in the door when it suddenly opened and Jonathon Stone stood before him, a little nervous obviously but otherwise with his usual solemn dignity. He was a lawyer of good repute and a partner of elderly Samuel Blakely, a widower with considerable wealth.

"I heard screams from here," explained Jud, "and I saw—"

"You saw?" repeated Jonathon Stone. "In that case, officer, come in."

Jud took the chair that was offered him while Mr. Stone stood and paused a moment before he began to speak. Then he said, "The creature you saw was my twin brother. He is incurably insane. For years I've kept him here and he's been silent and never violent. But now he is a raving maniac. He hates everyone but me and his only thought is of destruction. This has been my secret. No one, not even my partner Sam Blakely, has known of this. But now the truth will be out, I suppose. I will have my brother committed to an asylum as soon as possible."

"I—I'm sorry," said Jud. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Not now," replied Stone, "but I may want you for a witness later to get him into the institution. And that can't be too soon. I'm afraid now of what he might do."

A few times after that, Jud heard the demented cries and saw the black mop of tangled hair at the window, but he saw no reason to question Jonathon Stone further. The man, he thought, was tormented enough and would take care of the situation as soon as possible.

Then one night, the screams seemed to curdle the air and Jud Hanley saw the big white house in flames. A fire alarm box was near so he crashed the glass and put in the call. Then he ran as fast as he could to the house and met Jonathon Stone coming out. He was not the calm attorney that Jud had seen before. His hair was rumpled and his hand shook visibly.

"He did it," quavered Stone. "He set the house on fire but that's not all. He escaped me today and—well, he told me that he killed my partner Blakely out of jealousy. We were quarreling when he set fire to the house. I was afraid something like this would happen."

The arrival of the fire trucks seemed to surprise Jonathon Stone. "How did they get here so soon?" he asked.

"I called them," answered Officer Hanley. Then, while the fire department worked, Jud left to put in a call to the Homicide Department.

"You're right," said the Chief. "Samuel Blakely was murdered. My men are out there right now."

Jud was sure that the maniac had committed the crime and he was probably now dead. But when he returned to the Stone house, he found that the fire was out without too much damage. Fire Chief Morgan came to meet him, explaining that it was mostly in the roof and the rafters.

"What about the man up there?" asked Hanley.

"What man?" queried Morgan. "All we found that resembled a man was a false wig."

Jonathon Stone overheard and tried to make a getaway but Jud Hanley was too quick for him. And after that, Stone made no effort to cover up his crime. He confessed immediately that he, himself, had killed his partner Blakely because he knew the old man had made him sole heir of his will. There had never been a twin brother but he, Stone, had played the part—putting on the wig and screaming from the window. An insane man, he knew, could not be convicted of a crime, especially when he had died in a fire. Only the fire had been started by Jonathon Stone, too, to cover false evidence and collect insurance.

"Wow," muttered Fire Chief Morgan, after Jonathon Stone had been taken away in a police wagon. "I didn't get the pitch at first. He made out like he had a brother who was nuts, huh? And no twin brother at all."

"No," answered Jud. "The maniac was a myth. But, if you ask me, Jonathon Stone is the maniac."

THE CORPSE WHO PROWLED BY NIGHT

AIEEEEOOO!

I-IT'S THE KILLER'S CORPSE...JUST LIKE THEY SAID! HE'S COME BACK TO STOP US FROM DESTROYING HIS TOMB!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

SO EVIL WAS SILAS DUNSTER IN LIFE THAT THE TOWNFOLK BURIED HIS BODY APART FROM THE OTHER DEAD TO ISOLATE HIS VILE SPIRIT! BUT WHEN PROGRESS THREATENED TO DISTURB HIS OMINOUS RESTING PLACE, THE CORPSE OF SILAS DUNSTER BATTERED ITS WAY TO FREEDOM BRINGING HORRIBLE DEATH AND MISERY TO SORROW VALLEY!

YES, PROGRESS HAD COME TO SORROW VALLEY! THE WORKERS READIED THEIR EQUIPMENT... SOON, A MODERN HIGHWAY WOULD TEAR ASIDE THE VILLAGE'S DARK SECRETS!

AND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, WORKMEN ENTER THE FORBIDDEN TOMB! THE CHAINS AND LOCKS ARE TORN OFF!

THAT NIGHT DEEP TERROR COVERS SORROW VALLEY! BLINDS ARE DROPPED---SHUTTERS ARE DRAWN! CLAMMY FINGERS OF FEAR CLUTCH THE VILLAGE---
HENRY---COME INSIDE QUICKLY!
S-SUFFERING CATS! THEY'RE LOCKING THE PLACE UP LIKE A SAFE! THE WHOLE VILLAGE IS SCARED STIFF! WHAT A PACK OF CRACK-POTS!

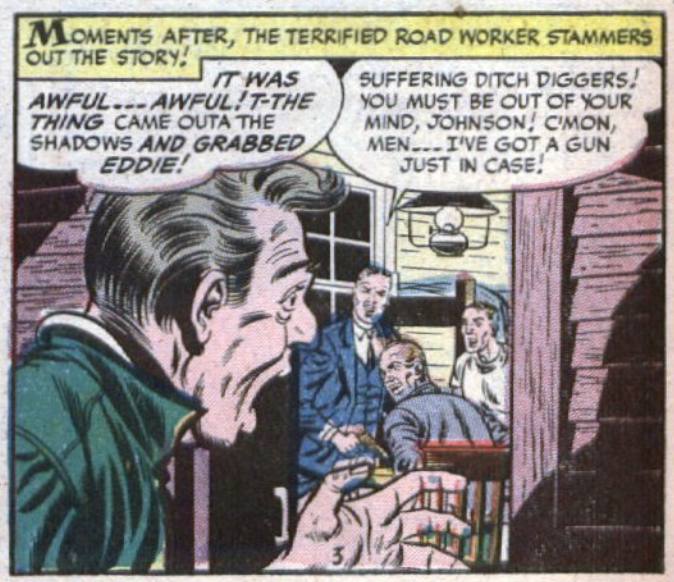
BOY, WILL I BE GLAD WHEN THIS JOB IS OVER! WHAT A JOINT! NO MOVIES, NO RESTAURANTS---NOTHING TO DO ON OUR TIME OFF!
HEY---THERE'S ONE CITIZEN OUTSIDE! LET'S SEE IF HE KNOWS OF A ROADHOUSE OR SOMETHING NEARBY!

MISTER, CAN YOU--- YIIIIII!
G-GREAT HANNAH!

I-IT'S NOT HUMAN! HELP!
Y-YEOW!

SUDDENLY!
YARRAGHH!

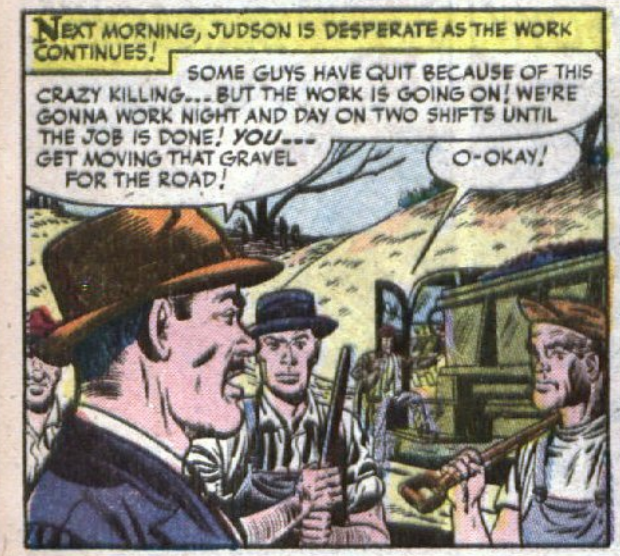
G-GOOD GRIEF! I-I OUGHT TO GO BACK--- B-BUT I CAN'T HELP HIM NOW! H-HE'S DEAD FOR SURE!


MOMENTS AFTER, THE TERRIFIED ROAD WORKER STAMMERS OUT THE STORY!
IT WAS AWFUL---AWFUL! T-THE THING CAME OUTA THE SHADOWS AND GRABBED EDDIE!
SUFFERING DITCH DIGGERS! YOU MUST BE OUT OF YOUR MIND, JOHNSON! C'MON, MEN---I'VE GOT A GUN JUST IN CASE!

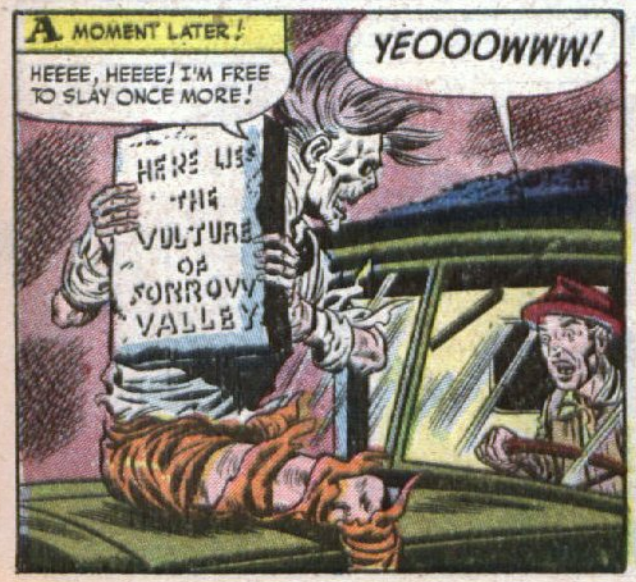
AS THE MEN SEARCH THE WOODS OF EERIE SORROW VALLEY...
DEAD! POOR EDDIE...WON'T BE CLEARING ANY MORE BRUSH FOR ROADS!
LOOK! L-LOOK OVER THERE!
HEEEEEE HEEEEE AIEEEOOO!

I-IT WAS THE KILLER'S CORPSE... JUST LIKE THEY SAID! H-HE'S COME BACK BECAUSE WE DISTURBED HIS TOMB!
SHUT UP! SUCH FANTASTIC THINGS DON'T HAPPEN! WE'LL GO DOWN TO THE MORGUE! I'LL PROVE TO YOU THE BODY IS STILL THERE!

BUT LATER, WHEN THE "VULTURE'S" COFFIN IS OPENED!
WHA...?
E-EMPTY!

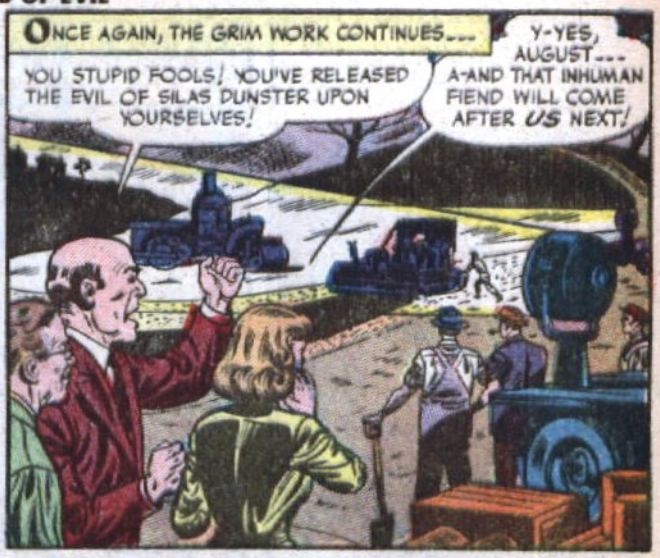

NEXT MORNING, JUDSON IS DESPERATE AS THE WORK CONTINUES!
SOME GUYS HAVE QUIT BECAUSE OF THIS CRAZY KILLING...BUT THE WORK IS GOING ON! WE'RE GONNA WORK NIGHT AND DAY ON TWO SHIFTS UNTIL THE JOB IS DONE! YOU... GET MOVING THAT GRAVEL FOR THE ROAD!
O-OKAY!

THE WORK GOES ON FRANTICALLY THROUGH THE DAY! THEN, AS EVENING FALLS...
EEEEEEE! I-IT'S THE CORPSE OF SILAS DUNSTER...THERE ATOP THE TRUCK!
G-GREAT GLORY! MERCY ON US ALL!

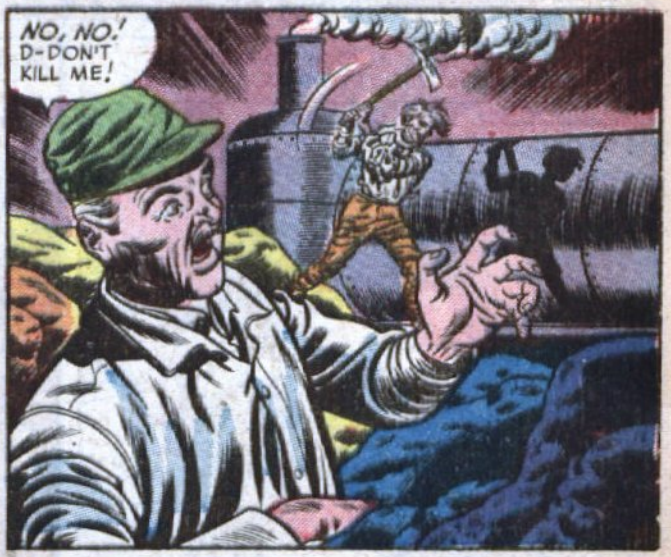

A MOMENT LATER!
HEEEE, HEEEE! I'M FREE TO SLAY ONCE MORE!
YEOOOWWW!
HERE LIES THE VULTURE OF SORROW VALLEY

DIE-E-E-E! DIE-EE-E-E!
YA-A-A-A!

AFTERWARD!
T-THE MONSTER'S BURIAL STONE! W-WHAT'LL WE DO, JUDSON!
G-GET BACK TO WORK, MILLER! START TARRING THAT ROAD! THIS JOB HAS GOT TO BE FINISHED GHOST OR NO GHOST! THE POLICE ARE COMING TO PROTECT YOU!
Y-YES, SIR!
HERE LIES THE VULTURE OF SORROW VALLEY


ONCE AGAIN, THE GRIM WORK CONTINUES...
YOU STUPID FOOLS! YOU'VE RELEASED THE EVIL OF SILAS DUNSTER UPON YOURSELVES!
Y-YES, AUGUST... A-AND THAT INHUMAN FIEND WILL COME AFTER US NEXT!

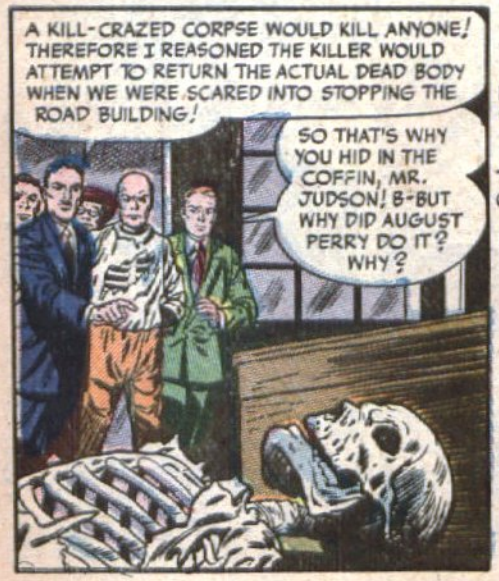
LATER, AS THE MOON RISES HIGH IN THE HEAVENS!
WORKING NIGHT AND DAY...SOME CRAZY MAN KILLING US OFF! BAH! JUDSON'S CRAZY TO GO ON WITH THIS JOB! WELL, BETTER GET BACK TO WORK...
YIPE!
HE-LL-O, THERE!


NO, NO! D-DON'T KILL ME!

THE AXE DESCENDS, A FEARFUL WAVE OF HOT TAR GUSHES FORTH AND...
YAAAAA!
HEE, HEEEEEEE!

THEN...
I-IT WAS... THE CORPSE... OH-H-H!
GREAT SCOTT! T-THE THING'S GOT MILLER!

IT'S...NO USE, BOYS! WE CAN'T FIGHT A CORPSE! THE JOB'S DONE! I'M QUITTING IT!
POOR DEVIL! IT'S ABOUT TIME, JUDSON!



WHY? THAT WAS THE PUZZLING QUESTION THAT PLAGUED THE FOLKS OF SORROW VALLEY FOR MANY WEEKS! UNTIL THE DAY THE ROAD PASSED OVER AUGUST PERRY'S FARM AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL!

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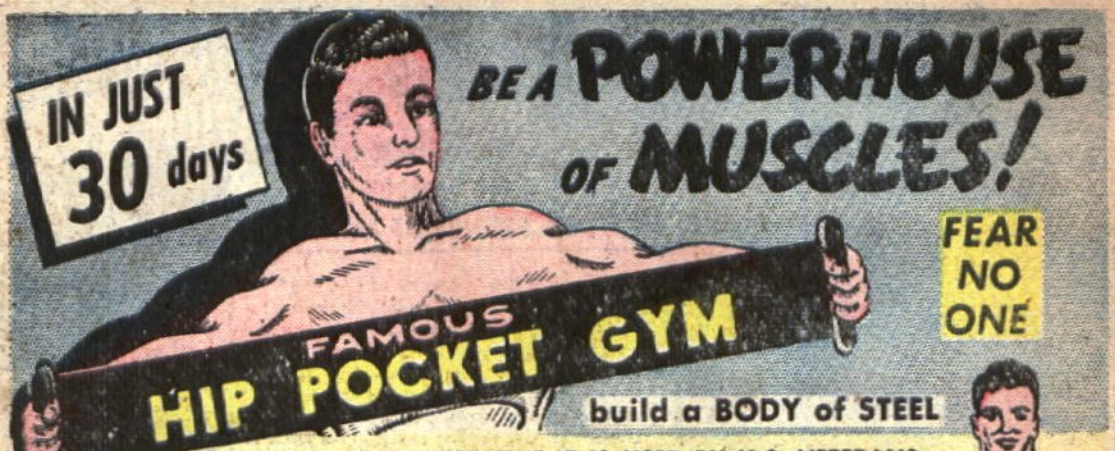

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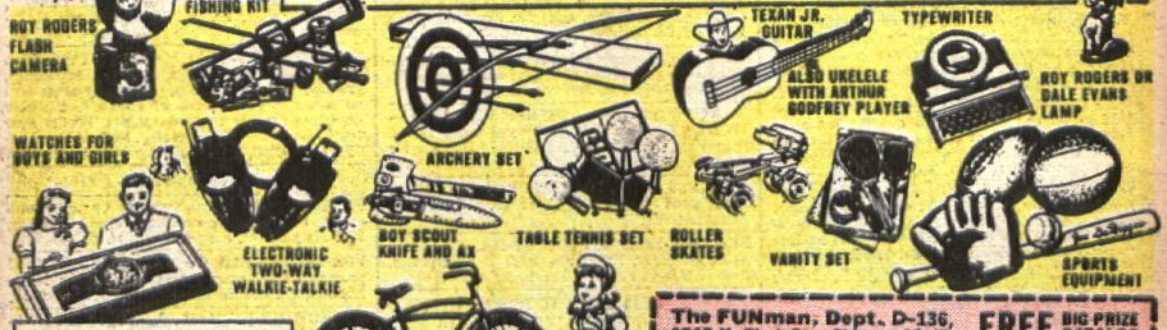

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